

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT BOGOTA 3232 ACTION SECSTATE INFO DEA HQS
DATED APR 6, 1978.

QUOTE: UNCLAS BOGOTA 3232

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: SNAR, PEPR, PINT, CO, US

SUBJECT: DRUG TRAFFIC: TEXT OF LETTERS FROM PRESIDENTIAL

CANDIDATE TURBAY AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE VARON TO

AMBASSADOR, AND FROM THE AMBASSADOR TO VARON

REGARDING CBS PROGRAM'S CORRUPTION CHARGES

REFS: (A) BOGOTA 3198; (B) BOGOTA 3214; (C) BOGOTA 3180

1. FOLLOWING ARE INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF SUBJECT LETTERS.

(A) "BOGOTA, APRIL 3, 1978.

MR. AMBASSADOR:

I UNDERSTOOD THAT LAST NIGHT ONE OF THE AMERICAN TV
CHANNELS PRESENTED VARIOUS REPORTS REGARDING DRUG TRAFFIC IN
COLOMBIA. THE REPORTER INTERVIEWED PRESIDENT LOPEZ IN BOGOTA
AND, IN THE UNITED STATES, MR. BOURNE, THE HIGHEST NARCOTICS
AUTHORITY, WORKING IN THE WHITE HOUSE WITH A VERY HIGH HIERARCHY.
BOTH PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND MR. BOURNE WERE CATEGORICAL
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IN DENYING THE FALSE ALLEGATIONS WHICH, AS A RESULT OF THE VERY
DIRTY CAMPAIGN INITIATED AGAINST MY HONOR, HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING
DURING THE LAST FEW MONTHS IN THE BOGOTA RUMOR MILLS AND WHICH
HAVE REACHED, AS I ANNOUNCED BEFORE THE RECENT CONVENTION OF
MY PARTY, THE PRESS, EMBASSIES AND FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS. NEVER-
THELESS, I KNOW THAT IN THE PROGRAM OF MR. MIKE WALLACE, THE
RESPONSES OF MR. BOURNE WERE DISTORTED, ESPECIALLY THOSE RESPONSES
WHICH EMPHATICALLY AND WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT DENIED THE
OFFENSIVE AND CALUMNIOUS STATEMENTS SELECTED BY THE REPORTER.
I HAVE IN MY POSSESSION THE EXACT VERSION OF WHAT MR.

BOURNE SAID AND I HAVE BEEN INFORMED, BY PERSONS WHO SAW THE PROGRAM, THAT IT OMITTED THE RESPONSES IN WHICH SAID HIGH WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS ANSWERED IN A MANNER WHICH PUTS AN END TO THE CAMPAIGN OF INFAMY WHICH IGNOBLE ADVERSARIES WERE FORMING AGAINST ME, FOR UNDENIABLY POLITICAL ENDS AS MR. BOURNE HIMSELF WARNED IN ONE OF HIS RESPONSES.

FOR THE HONOR OF MY COUNTRY AND MY PARTY, THE LATTER OF WHICH I AM PRESENTLY NATIONAL DIRECTOR AND CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC, I DO NOT ACCEPT THAT MY REPUTATION AND ALL WHICH I REPRESENT REMAIN AFFECTED, IN ANY WAY, BY THE DISTORTED DECLARATIONS OF A UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT I ASK YOU, AS AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES, TO CONFIRM TO THE COLOMBIAN PEOPLE WHAT YOU OR YOUR GOVERNMENT KNOW CONCERNING MY IRREPROACHABLE MORAL CONDUCT. SAID DECLARATION IS INDISPENSABLE, NOT BECAUSE MY HONOR NEEDS TO BE CERTIFIED BY ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT, BUT BECAUSE I CANNOT PERMIT THAT MY DETRACTORS FIND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CALUMNY IN FALSE REPORTS AND DISTORTED STATEMENTS OF YOUR OFFICIALS. FOR SOME TIME YOU, MR. AMBASSADOR, AND YOUR GOVERNMENT HAVE KNOWN MY POSITION ON THE DRUG PROBLEM AND I DO NOT WISH THAT THERE BE ANY SECRET ABOUT IT IN THE OPINION OF OUR TWO NATIONS. JULIO CESAR TURBAY AYALA"

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(B) AMBASSADOR TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE VARON VALENCIA:

"MARCH 28, 1978.

EXCELLENCY:

I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR EXCELLENCY'S LETTER DATED FEBRUARY 23, 1978 IN WHICH YOU MAKE REFERENCE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, TO A REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE ON NARCOTICS. THE ONLY RECENT CONGRESSIONAL REPORT RELATED TO THIS MATTER AND OF WHICH THE EMBASSY IS AWARE IS THAT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, A COPY OF WHICH I GAVE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC LAST MONTH. A SPANISH TRANSLATION OF THE PART OF THE REPORT THAT CONCERNS COLOMBIA WAS INCLUDED IN THE PUBLIC COMMUNIQUE OF THE PRESIDENCY DATED JANUARY 21 AND IN THIS REPORT NO MENTION IS MADE OF ANY OFFICIAL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA.

A SEARCH OF OUR FILES INDICATES, NEVERTHELESS, THE EXISTENCE OF AN UNPROVED AND UNEVALUATED ALLEGATION, ABOUT A RECOMMENDATION THAT THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE GAVE TO AN INDIVIDUAL NAMED NORBERTO MORENO CARRILLO, WHO WAS INVOLVED IN A JUDICIAL HEARING FOR THE POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS IN POPAYAN IN MARCH OF LAST YEAR. THIS ACCUSATION, AS WITH MANY OTHER REPORTS OF WHICH WE BECAME AWARE, WAS HANDLED BY THE EMBASSY IN A CONFIDENTIAL MANNER AND WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WOULD BE THE SUBJECT OF AN INVESTIGATION BY THE COMPETENT COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES.

(COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE)

DIEGO C. ASENSIO"

(C) MINISTER OF DEFENSE VARON VALENCIA TO AMBASSADOR:

"BOGOTA, APRIL 4, 1978.

MR. AMBASSADOR:

IN A LETTER DATED FEBRUARY 22, 1978, I ASKED YOU ABOUT AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN 'THE MONDE' (WHICH WAS REPRODUCED BY A NUMBER OF COLOMBIAN PUBLICATIONS), WHICH AFFIRMED THAT THERE WAS OFFICIAL COMPLICITY TO OBSTRUCT THE (GOC'S) FIGHT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKERS. THE ARTICLE ALLEGED THAT THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE HIMSELF WAS INVOLVED AND SAID HIS INVOLVEMENT WAS MADE EXPLICIT IN A CONFIDENTIAL REPORT ISSUED BY THE UNITED STATES SENATE.
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I SENT THIS LETTER TO YOU PRECISELY BECAUSE THE EMBASSY DID NOT DENY THESE ALLEGATIONS. AND YOU MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT THE ORIGINAL INFORMATION CAME FROM YOUR GOVERNMENT. YOU ANSWERED IN A LETTER DATED MARCH 28, 1978 AND STATED: 'THE ONLY RECENT CONGRESSIONAL REPORT ON DRUGS IS THAT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, A COPY OF WHICH I MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PRESIDENT LAST MONTH. A SPANISH TRANSLATION OF THE PORTION RELATING TO COLOMBIA WAS ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE ON JANUARY 21. THIS REPORT DOES NOT CONTAIN THE NAME OF ANY COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.' IN THE SECOND PART OF YOUR LETTER YOU STATE: 'AN INSPECTION OF OUR FILES INDICATES, NONETHELESS, THE EXISTENCE OF AN UNSUBSTANTIATED, UNEVALUATED CHARGE (UNDERLINING IS MINE) REGARDING A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION GIVEN BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE TO NORBERTO MORENO CARRILLO WHO WAS BEING TRIED IN POPAYAN FOR POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS IN MARCH OF LAST YEAR. YOU ALSO INDICATED THAT THIS CHARGE, AS WELL AS OTHERS WHICH COME TO YOUR ATTENTION, WAS HANDLED BY THE EMBASSY IN A CONFIDENTIAL MANNER, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WOULD BE INVESTIGATED BY COMPETENT COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES.

PRECISELY ON THIS SUBJECT, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC ASKED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO ESTABLISH THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION WHICH IN THE EMBASSY'S OPINION WAS SUPPOSEDLY GIVEN BY THE COLOMBIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE TO THE SUBJECT NAMED NORBERTO MORENO CARRILLO INVOLVED IN A TRIAL FOR POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS IN POPAYAN.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ORDERED AN INVESTIGATION ON THAT TRIAL WHICH WAS COMPLETED ON FEBRUARY 1, 1978, AND CONDUCTED BY MESSRS. HERNANDO ACOSTA SANCHEZ, ESQ., REGIONAL ATTORNEY; VICE ADMIRAL EDUARDO MELENDEZ RAMIREZ, ATTORNEY FOR THE ARMED FORCES; AND ORLANDO NOEL BENAVIDES BOLANOS, ESQ.,
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ASSISTANT LAWYER AND SPECIAL AGENT ON THE TRIAL FOR VIOLATION OF THE NATIONAL NARCOTICS STATUTE, WHICH WAS BEIGN HANDLED BY THE FIFTH COURT OF POPAYAN, AGAINST NORBERTO MORENO CARRILLO AND OTHER PARTIES. AN AUTHENTIC PHOTOCOPY OF THIS DO-

CUMENT IS IN MY POSSESSION, AND I CAN TRANSCRIBE LETERALLY THE PORTION CONCERNING ME AND WHICH SAYS: "HAVING COMPLETED THE SPECIAL VISIT, SUBJECT OF THIS JUDICIAL ACTION, THE INTERVENING AUTHORITIES AGREE TO RATIFY EXPRESSLY THAT NONE OF THE PAGES OF THIS TRIAL SHOW THE NAMES OF THE MINISTERS OF JUSTICE, NATIONAL DEFENSE, AND PUBLIC WORKS AND SOCIAL SECURITY, OR ANY OTHER MINISTER OF STATE."

SIMULTANEOUSLY, AND AS A REPLY TO THE REQUEST MADE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, THE ATTORNEY GENRAL SENT THE FOLLOWING COMMUNICATION:

"REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA - PUBLIC MINISTRY, OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL - ATTORNEY GENERAL - BOGOTA, D.E., JANUARY 30, 1978.

MR. PRESIDENT:

I TAKE LIBERTY TO INFORM YOU THAT IN THE TRIAL AGAINST NORBERTO MORENO CARRILLO WHICH IS BEING PROCESSED IN THE FIFTH COURT OF POPAYAN FOR TRAFFIC OF NARCOTICS, AND ON WHICH MR. ORLANDO NOEL BENAVIDES, ESQ., POPAYAN'S ASSISTANT REGIONAL ATTORNEY IS ACTING AS SPECIAL AGENT FOR THE PUBLIC MINISTRY, THERE IS NO MENTION WHATSOEVER OF THE NAME OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, GENERAL ABRAHAM VARON VALENCIA (THE UNDERLINING IS MINE). THE ONLY REFERENCE TO ENTITIES UNDER THIS MINISTRY WHICH IS MADE IN THE TRIAL IS THE ONE WHICH APPEARS ON PAGE 351, OF BOOK TWO, AS PER TELEPHONE CALL RECEIVED TODAY, WHICH DEALS WITH A COMMUNICATION THAT TEXTUALLY SAYS:

"REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA - MINISTRY OF DEFENSE- ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF - BOGOTA, MARCH 30, 1977. NUMBER CEAYG-156.
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SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO THE FIFTH CRIMINAL CIRCUIT COURT, POPAYAN (CAUCA). THE BELOW-NAMED LT. COL. EFRAIN MARTINEZ, ROCHI, ARMY OFFICER ON ACTIVE DUTY, SWEARS THAT HE HAS KNOWN MR. NORBERTO MORENO CARRILLO, IDENTITY CARD # 2,022,575 ISSUED IN BUCARAMANGA, FOR A LONG TIME AND ATTESTS TO HIS GOOD CONDUCT AND INTEGRITY. SIGNED: LT. COL. EFRAIN MARTINEZ ROCHI - I.D. NO. 5,540,420. BUCARAMANGA (OFFICIAL STAMP AFFIXED). I THEREBY FULFILL THE REQUEST MADE OF ME BY THE PRESIDENT THIS MORNING. (SIGNED) JAIME SERRANO RUEDA."

AS YOU CAN READILY UNDERSTAND, MR. AMBASSADOR, THE UNEVALUATED AND UNPROVEN ALLEGATIONS WHICH YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS MADE AVAILABLE AND WHICH ARE RELATED TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE TO THE SUBJECT NORBERTO MORENO CARRILLO IS ABSOLUTELY FALSE AS A LETTERHEAD FROM THE "MINISTER OF DEFENSE" WAS USED AS IF IT WERE FROM THE MINISTER HIMSELF, PERSONALLY.

BECUASE OF THE UNPARDONABLE MISTAKE WHICH HAS BEEN COMMITTED, I BELIEVE IT IS PERTINENT TO ASK YOU, MR. AMBASSADOR, JUST WHAT KIND OF INFORMANTS YOUR INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES EMPLOY - WHAT ARE THEIR MORAL STANDARDS? WHAT IS THEIR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE? WHAT IS THEIR NATIONALITY? ALSO, HAS IT OCCURRED TO YOU TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER YOUR INFORMANTS - IN ADDITION TO BEING MOTIVATED BY THE PAY THEY RECEIVE - ARE ACTING ON THE BASIS OF THEIR OWN PERSONAL OPINIONS IN ORDER TO PUT INTO QUESTION THE INTEGRITY OF THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND SEVERAL OF ITS MINISTERS, WITH MANIFEST IRRESPONSIBILITY, APPARENTLY ACCEPTED AND OFFICIALLY CONDONED BY YOUR GOVERNMENT.

THE INFORMATION PUBLISHED IN FOREIGN NEWSPAPERS, SUCH AS "LE MONDE" OF PARIS, AND AMPLY DIVULGED BY THE NATIONAL PRESS,
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ORIGINATED BY FALSE INFORMATION FROM YOUR GOVERNMENT AND COMPLETED IN AN ABSURD FORM BY THE U.S. TELEVISION NETWORK, CBS, WHICH MALICIOUSLY DISTORTED AND INTERVIEW GRANTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, HAS CAUSED A SERIOUS LOSS OF PRESTIGE FOR THE NATION AND ITS GOVERNMENT AND HAS GRAVELY INJURED THE DIGNITY OF THE COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES AND ITS MINISTER OF DEFENSE, TO WHOM IT HAS ALSO CAUSED MORAL INJURY WHICH NECESSARILY AFFECTS HIS OWN FAMILY. SINCERELY,
GEN. ABRAHAM VARON VALENCIA, MINISTER OF DEFENSE."

D. LETTER FROM AMBASSADOR ASECIO TO DR. TURBAY:
"BOGOTA, APRIL 3, 1978.

DEAR DOCTOR TURBAY:

UNFORTUNATELY WE STILL DO NOT HAVE A TRANSCRIPT OR A VIDEOTAPE OF THE PROGRAM "SIXTY MINUTES" WHICH APPEARED ON CBS TELEVISION ON APRIL 2, IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO COMPARE THE EDITED VERSION OF THE DECLARATIONS OF THE STATEMENTS OF DR. PETER BOURNE WITH THE COMPLETE TEXT OF THE ORIGINAL INTERVIEW GIVEN BY DR. BOURNE. IN THE COMPLETE THEXT OF THIS INTERVIEW IS THE UNEQUIVOCAL DECLARATION THAT "WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT MR. TURBAY PERSONALLY HAS BEEN IN ANY WAY INVOLVED IN THIS AND WE NEVER SUGGESTED SUCH A THING TO PRESIDENT LOPEZ MICHELSEN." IN THE ORIGINAL DECLARATION IT IS ALSO STATED "WE DID NOT FIND, ABSOLUTELY, ANY PROOF THAT SUPPORTS THIS ACCUSATION AGAINST MR. TURBAY."

IT IS THE POSITION OF MY GOVERNMENT THAT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT YOU HAVE HAD ANY PART WHATSOEVER IN THE TRAFFIC OF NARCOTICS.

BASED ON MY OWN CONVERSATIONS WITH YOU, ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A MAJOR EFFORT FOR NARCOTICS INTERDICTION, I FIND COMPLETELY INCOMPREHENSIBLE AND ABSURD ANY ALLEGATION

OF YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC.

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WITH THE ASSURANCES OF MY PERSONAL RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION,
I REMAIN SENCERELY, DIEGO C. ASECIO"

2. THE AMBASSADOR'S RESPONSE TO VARON'S LATEST LETTER IS
DISCUSSED IN REF A.

3. SPANISH COPIES HAVE BETN POUCHED TO ARA/AND/C.
ASENCIO UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 11 apr 1978
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Document Source: ADS
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Drafter: EDDY EDWARDS
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Image Path:
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